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**Transmitted via Email**

July 5, 2005

MINNESOTA BULLETIN NO. 450-5-1

**SUBJECT: TCH – CONSERVATION SYSTEM GUIDES (CSGs) AND CONSERVATION  
SYSTEMS GUIDANCE AND INSTRUCTIONS**

**ACTION DUE BY: July 29, 2005**

Purpose: To provide guidance and instruction to address critical components of the CSGs and CS needed for data integrity and the Performance Reporting System (PRS)

Expiration Date: September 30, 2005

The electronic CSG and the associated CS have been in existence since 2003 in the Field Office Technical Guide. NRCS is continuing the effort to populate the CSG database to serve as planning, reporting, training, and documentation tools. The CSGs and associated CS need to be properly developed and populated with the appropriate data in order to meet these intended purposes. Currently, several items need to be addressed to allow the CSG system to function as designed.

In order to keep the CSG and associated CS properly populated and maintained, the following tasks must be accomplished by July 29, 2005 and will help insure that progress will be properly captured in PRS:

1. Enter critical data correctly, ensuring data integrity,
2. Ensure minimum requirements for CSGs meet performance measures, and
3. Ensure the proper number of CSGs and CSs needed to represent the resource issues within the Common Resource Areas.

Following are the specific instructions:

**Step-by-Step Instructions for Properly Populating and Maintaining CSGs and Associated CS**

The first part of these instructions addresses data integrity and the second part highlights the minimum requirements for CSGs to meet this year's performance measures in PRS. Staff responsible for CSGs must address these items before progress will be properly captured.

## Step One – Entering Critical Data Correctly and Ensuring Data Integrity

The CSG process is a conservation planning tool, a performance reporting tool, a training tool and documentation tool. For the CSG system of planning and progress reporting processes to function as planned the following critical items of data must be entered correctly:

1. Identify a primary resource concern for each CS **and** ensure that the primary resource concern is one of the resource concerns listed in the CSG with the appropriate impacts. The Primary Resource Concern entered for the conservation system must be addressed in the associated CSG.

At this time numerous cases exist where the primary concern listed is not one of the concerns addressed in the CGS and Conservation System (CS). A spreadsheet is attached listing those situations (*PrimaryResourceConcern\_Not\_050413.xls*)

**Action:** Check all CSGs to ensure the primary resource concern is also addressed in the CSG.

2. Enter threshold, baseline and effect values for all measurable resource concerns appropriate for the CSG in question. Sheet and Rill erosion, wind erosion, SCI and Irrigation induced erosion are the only measurable resource concerns needing values entered at this time. At this time, ITC has populated all null threshold values for sheet and rill erosion and wind erosion with a value of “5”. This will need to be edited if this value is not correct for the CSG. The definitions for these values is as follows:

Threshold: the number that is set in the Quality Criteria for the resource concern.

Baseline: the current condition **before** treatment (the before condition)

Effect: the condition **after** treatment (the result of applying the conservation plan or the after condition)

Impact: This is calculated by the program and is not entered. It is the difference between the before and the after condition.

**Action:** Enter or edit typical values for both the threshold and baseline values in the CSG, and the effects value in the CS. Also review systems where the threshold values are low to determine if they are correct for the CSG. Spreadsheets are attached listing guides where action is needed. (*Null\_Threshold\_Guides\_050401.xls* and *Low-Threshold\_RMS\_050401.xls*).

3. Ensure that Conservation Systems under the CSG are RMS level systems. The only exception would be a CS for an HEL plan.
4. Use a CSG name and code, and Conservation System name and code only once. We do not have any duplicate names in our Minnesota guides. **No Action Needed in Minnesota.**

5. Ensure that Systems have the exact same resource concerns as their CSG. This is generally caused when two browser windows are open at the same time when editing the System or Guide. **Action:** Review the CSs to ensure that they have the same resource concerns as their associated Guide and the correct percentage impact for all practices. All Conservation Systems should have the exact same Resource Concerns as their individual parent Conservation System Guide. All Conservation Practices should be linked to the same Resource Concerns as all of the Practices in the same Conservation System. Guides needing action are listed in the attached spreadsheet (*SystemsInconsistentData\_050408.xls*). There are three different groups of data. Each group has a different problem. For example, the first group lists Conservation Systems that have Practices linked to a different number of non-measurable resource concerns. Each group lists the Guide ID in column A, Guide Code in column B, guide status in column C, System ID in column D and system Label in column E.

## Step Two – Ensuring Minimum requirements for CSGs to Meet Performance Measures

The following Performance Measures are collected from the CSGs. CSGs must be reviewed to ensure that they are properly populated with the correct data, or the performance measures will not be captured correctly.

### PRS performance data coming from CSGs:

Performance Business Definitions	Definition	Land Use	Primary Resource Concern (from CSG)	Program
<b>Reduction in the acreage of cropland soils damaged by erosion (erosion to T or below), acres</b>	Acres of cropland and hayland that were eroding above “T” prior to the application of conservation practices and are eroding at or below “T” after application	Cropland Hayland	a. Soil Erosion - Sheet and Rill Erosion b. Soil Erosion – Wind Erosion	CTA EQIP CRP WRP
<b>Soil erosion reduced, tons</b>	The reduction, in tons, of sediment resulting from soil erosion from all land use types	Cropland Hayland Forestland Grazing land Urban land	a. Soil Erosion - Sheet and Rill Erosion b. Soil Erosion – Wind Erosion	CTA EQIP CRP FRPP

<p><b>Agricultural land actively managed for the protection and enhancement of habitat for species with declining populations, acres</b></p>	<p>Land on which wildlife habitat is the primary resource concern, and which is actively managed for the protection and enhancement of habitat for declining populations of species of concern, including state and federal threatened and endangered species.</p>	<p>Wildlife Land  Forestland</p>	<p>a. Plant Condition – Threatened or Endangered Plant Species: Plant Species Listed or Proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act</p> <p>b. Plant Condition – Threatened or Endangered Plant Species: Declining Species, Species of Concern</p> <p>c. Fish and Wildlife – Threatened and Endangered Fish and wildlife Species: Fish and Wildlife Species Listed or Proposed for Listing under the Endangered Species Act</p> <p>d. Fish and Wildlife –</p>	<p>EQIP WHIP GRP</p>
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			Threatened and Endangered Fish and Wildlife Species: Declining Species and Species of Concern	
<b>Agricultural lands treated for which wildlife habitat is the primary or secondary resource concern, acres</b>	Acres on which wildlife habitat management practices have been applied in the fiscal year, where wildlife habitat management is the primary or secondary resource concern.	Cropland Hayland Forestland Grazing Land Wildlife Land	Fish and Wildlife – as a primary or secondary resource concern <b>AND</b> where any of the following practices have been completed: 643,644, 645,646 and 647.	CTA CRP RC&D
<b>Reduction in potential sediment delivery from cropland, percent</b>	The reduction in tons of potential cropland sediment delivery resulting from sheet and rill erosion.	Cropland	Soil Erosion – Sheet and rill erosion	(this is not listed in the PRS Bus. Def. Document)
<b>Irrigation efficiency improved, acre-in/Ac/Yr (CSG) and acre-feet in PRS</b>	Acre-feet of water used more efficiently through conservation practices applied on irrigated land. PRS converts the SCG acre inches per year to PRS acre feet as a reporting unit.	Irrigated Cropland	Water Quality – Inefficient Water Use on Irrigated Land	CTA EQIP

### Step Three – Ensuring the Proper Number of CSGs and CSs Needed

**Guidelines to determine how many CSGs and CSs that you need to represent the resource issues within a CRA:**

1. The number one rule for CSG and CS is that they are developed for only the “typical” situations that occur. The CSG concept is not designed to address all types of situations that might occur on the landscape, nor is the reporting concept designed to address all types of situations that might occur.

2. A minimum of one CSG per applicable land use in each CRA and a minimum of one CS for each CSG is the minimum. Additional CSGs should only be developed for a land use within a CRA where there is a major difference in the baseline / benchmark condition. Additional CSs under the CSG should be developed when the planned practices and the percent effect change significantly. Try to keep the number of CSGs to a minimum.

#### **Step Four – Viewing changes in Toolkit**

As practice narratives or conservation system guides (CSG) are added or changed, TK domain data needs to be updated so user's have access to changed data. TK Tech Note #6 outlines this process by using the Toolkit Data Cleaner which was also a subject in Tech Notes 3a and 4a.

#### [Toolkit \(TK\) Tech Note Page](#)

Running the Data Cleanup script (downloaded from above page) deletes data from a number of the tables in the personal geodatabase (Toolkit5.0.mdb). When a user re-enters TK after running the cleanup script, they will get the prompt to "update their domain data". Doing this will allow access to new/changed narratives and CSGs. As outlined in note #6, the zip package has to be extracted to a folder on the C: drive and not to a server drive such as H, S or F.

Questions about PRS requirements should be directed to Ann English, ASTC (O) and questions about Conservation System Guidesheet development to Paul Flynn, State Resource Conservationist.

WILLIAM HUNT  
State Conservationist

Attachments: PrimaryResourceConcern\_Not\_050413.xls  
Null\_Threshold\_Guides\_050401.xls  
Low-Threshold\_RMS\_050401.xls  
SystemsInconsistentData\_050408.xls

DIST: ASTC (FO)  
AO.ARC  
SO.ECS  
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